



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Washington and William of Orange, Martin Luther and John Hampden. Louis, though eminently a religious man in the sense of being intensely superstitious, had nothing saintly in his character or conduct; but it would have fared ill with the saints who began to appear in the century after his death had he been worsted in his quarrel with Charles of Burgundy. Unwittingly, he was clearing the way for the Reformation; while Charles was the champion of the old order of things, and would have secured for it some centuries of additional life had Louis borne much resemblance to his father, or any resemblance to his son. Historical events are links in the great chain of human destinies; and it was as necessary for the ultimate triumph of freedom that the Swiss should succeed at Grandson, Morat, and Nancy, as it was that the English should destroy the Armada, and Americans be victorious at Saratoga and Yorktown.

-
7. — *Die Alttestamentliche Literatur, in einer Reihe von Aufsätzen dargestellt.* Von THEODOR NOELDEKE. Leipzig. 1868. 8vo. pp. 270.

THE phrase "Old Testament literature" has an unpleasant and irreverent sound to many ears. Is the inspired "word of God" to be called "literature"? Are the utterances of seers and prophets to be classed with the works of poets and philosophers? May we criticise Genesis as we criticise the cosmogony of Hesiod, and speak of the songs of David as we do of the songs of Burns or Béranger? This reverential repugnance more than anything else has hindered the free study of the books of the Old Testament as mere literary productions. It is not easy for the critic to discard the idea that these books are to be judged by other than ordinary rules, and are not to be associated with works of human composition. In spite of canons of criticism, there will almost always be a presumption that a biblical book, even with the most evident literary defects, must have merit beyond the best of unbiblical books. But there are numerous other hindrances to the literary appreciation of the books of the Old Testament. Such hindrances are found in the arbitrary distinction between canonical and apocryphal books; in the ancient Jewish division into the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographs, which fixes as by authority the proper place of the separate books; in the customary arrangement of the books, which makes no account of their age, their subject, or their value; in the notion of their immediate and close connection with the books of the New Testament, which makes every event and person in the Old Testament the type of some event

or person in the new dispensation ; and in the traditional ideas of their authorship, which continue to uphold the literary fame of the heroes of the Old Covenant, and teach that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, because these books tell of the laws which he gave, that David wrote the psalms sung in his court, and that Solomon spoke and compiled the proverbs of his reign. These theories and notions embarrass the student in his judgment of the true place and value of Hebrew books, and it is very difficult to be fairly rid of them.

There are Germans, nevertheless, who do get rid of them ; and eminent in this class is the friend of Adalbert Lipsius, Theodor Noeldeke, professor at Kiel. All common prejudices concerning the sacred books he wholly discards, and he comes to the examination of them with the same cool judgment that he would bring to the examination of a collection of Greek or of Chinese books. He makes no apology for his classifications or his conclusions, and has no concern for the impression which will be made by his free criticism. He judges a psalm by what it is worth as a poem, and not by the doctrine which it contains ; and when he sees a falsehood or an absurdity in the book which he is examining, he has no hesitation in calling it by its true name. The fact that Esther is in the canon does not prevent him from treating the book as an immoral and baseless fiction ; and the fact that Daniel is reckoned among the greater prophets does not relieve the stories of the book of Daniel from the charge of fantastic improbability. Noeldeke writes wholly as a literary critic, not in any way concerned to explain difficulties, to reconcile contradictions, or to vindicate the doctrine or inspiration of the books which he reviews.

In the class of historical books Noeldeke includes the Pentateuch and Joshua ; the Judges, with the appended story of Ruth ; the four books of Kings ; the Chronicles, with Ezra and Nehemiah, and the books of the Maccabees. In these books the larger part is historical, though there are poetic fragments inserted. None of these books in their present form are of very early origin. Noeldeke assigns to the Pentateuch an earlier date than some of the eminent German critics, but will not allow that any part of it was written by Moses. That it was compiled from various documents of different age and value seems to him unquestionable. The chief value of the book of Genesis is for him ethnographical.

In the second class, that of "romantic stories," Noeldeke reckons five, — Jonah, Esther, Judith, Tobit, and Aristeas. Jonah he conceives to have no claim to be a prophetic book, except in the use of the name of a Jewish prophet as the name of the hero of the story. It was taken into the class of prophetic books only to complete the mystic number of *twelve* minor prophets. The story itself, beautiful in its fancies, is full

of blunders in its facts. It was written to illustrate the duty of obeying the command of God, and the impartial love of God for heathen and Jew alike. Its moral tone seems to Noeldeke much higher than that of most of the Hebrew books, and it is free from Jewish narrowness and exclusiveness.

Esther, as a story, seems to him far inferior to Jonah. It is a wholly unfounded tale of treachery, vindictiveness, and Jewish pride, and, though valuable as a literary monument, is not in any sense a religious book. Judith is a much finer composition, and the Greek text in which it has come to us he holds to be unquestionably the translation of a Hebrew original. The story of Tobit is still more pleasing. This book, Noeldeke thinks, was originally written in Greek, about the middle of the third century before Christ. In the book of Aristeas, which tells the story of the origin of the Septuagint, we have a purely fanciful account, wholly unworthy of credit.

Of *lyric* literature in the Old Testament, the Psalms, and the Book of Lamentations, falsely ascribed to Jeremiah, are the principal specimens; but there are songs scattered through all the historical books. That some of the psalms in the collection were written by David himself, Noeldeke thinks to be possible; but the number of these is not large. He is by no means so much impressed with the beauty and dignity of these Hebrew lyrics as most men have been who have written about them, and finds not only harsh sentiment, but very moderate literary merit, in some of them. The older psalms are the better, — more original, strong, and inspiring than the later. The 19th, 23d, 29th, he thinks finer than any in the later period, except perhaps the 103d and 104th. The famous 119th Psalm, with its cabalistic divisions, seems to him only an endless and tiresome iteration of a very few thoughts. A part of the liturgical songs of praise likewise have, in his judgment, small value. The highest worth of the Hebrew psalms is in illustrating the religious feeling of the people.

The origin of the Lamentations is obscure, but it is nearly certain that they were not written at one time and as a single book, and that they cannot all have come from the same author. The differences in form and expression are sufficient to negative that supposition. Each of the songs is separate from the rest. The songs, too, have no prophetic character, nor have they any special resemblance to the genuine writings of Jeremiah.

The Song of Solomon, Noeldeke treats as a drama, — the only specimen which has come down to us of a kind of literature of which the Hebrews probably had their share. The plot is very simple, and the moral of the play is by no means low or degrading. The drama is

erotic, but not vulgar or sensual. The Christian practice of treating this book as an allegory was borrowed from the Jews, but the book itself has no mark of intentional allegory. It is a story of love and chastity, in dramatic form.

Of didactic works, Noeldeke reckons five in the Old Testament, — the Proverbs, Sirach, Ecclesiastes, the Wisdom of Solomon, and Job. Of these, by far the most valuable is the Book of Job, which is indeed the noblest work in Hebrew literature, the most artistic, the most elevated in thought, the most beautiful in style, and the most religious. It is probably one of the earliest compositions in the collection, though not so early as the reigns of the first kings. The proverbs of Sirach, Noeldeke prefers, on the whole, to the book of Proverbs, so called, of Solomon, which is formed really of three separate collections, with no evidence that Solomon was the compiler of either of them. Ecclesiastes is a late production, the work of a sceptic, low in moral tone, and with no religious sense. The Wisdom of Solomon is wholly an Alexandrine book, teaching the doctrine of immortality, which was unknown to the Jews of Palestine before the captivity. Solomon had no more to do with it than with the book of the Preacher.

The books of the Prophets, Noeldeke examines as a whole, taking the ground; now generally accepted, that the prophets were popular religious leaders and reformers, and that the prediction of distant future events was no part of their function. He gives no special account of the men or their works, but treats them, from the literary point of view, rather as rhapsodists, — such men as the *improvvisatori* of Italy, or as the dervishes of the East. Their burdens are the utterances of passionate patriotism, not always controlled by good sense, and he does not think it necessary to show that these denunciations and promises have an historical value. While this chapter on the Prophets is one of the most careful and interesting in the book, it is certainly too short for the importance of the subject, and leaves many important questions untouched.

Still more unsatisfactory will Noeldeke's treatment of Daniel and the Apocalyptic books be found by the millennial interpreters. To this literary critic the Book of Daniel is only a specimen of a peculiar form of composition, of no more moment to men than the visions of Piers Ploughman, or the dreams of the Prevorst seeress. For the class of books which are called Apocalyptic he has very small respect, except in so far as they are works of art.

On the "Canon and Text," and on the "Ancient Translations," the views of Noeldeke are those of the best critics. And, in general, we may say of this book that, destructive as his criticism seems to be, it is

honest, and appears to have no destructive purpose. Of course, readers will not accept his conclusions without hesitation, and not many will look as calmly as he upon his results. Nevertheless it is worth while to see in a book like this how the Hebrew Scriptures appear to one regarding them from a mere literary standpoint. It is possible that our reverence magnifies their literary merit. One thing is certain, — that most of those who glorify the words of the sacred volume, and compare it with heathen literatures to the disadvantage of the latter, have as little acquaintance with the books that they praise as the books that they depreciate. Only a small part of the Old Testament is habitually read in Christian churches or in Christian homes; and no printing-house publishes more that is systematically skipped and neglected than the printing-house of the Bible Society. The proposition to publish an expurgated edition or an abridgment of the Bible has almost a blasphemous sound; but does not every father of a family practically abridge and expurgate the volume as it is used in his house? Literary criticism of the Scripture may lead to a more just estimate of its worth and its service in forming the taste as well as the spiritual life of men and women to-day.

8. — *Abriss der deutschen Literaturgeschichte*. Von DR. E. P. EVANS, Professor der neueren Sprachen und Literatur an der Universität von Michigan. New York: Leypoldt and Holt. 1869. 12mo. pp. 240.

THIS "Abridgment of German Literary History," though the work of an American by birth and lineage, is in no sense an English work translated into the German tongue. The idiom is as purely Teutonic as if it had been written in Germany by a child of the soil. The only thing in the volume that betrays the nationality of the author is a directness and vigor of expression, which is rather English than German. It might well come from a German professor who had familiarized himself with the style and thought of the best English writers, and had learned to prefer short, crisp sentences to the involved periods which are tolerated in German.

This work was probably intended — as it will certainly be widely used — as a text-book for German classes in colleges and high-schools. Nowhere else can so much information concerning German literature be found in a form so condensed and in a style so simple. There are histories enough of German literature, and Professor Evans gives in his Introduction a catalogue of the best; but these are mostly too